Water Scarcity in the Country

1185. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news- item captioned "Water scarcity may cut life span in India" which appeared in the Hindustan Times, dated 15th January, 2000;

(b) whether India is one of the main countries, including China, North Africa, Middle-East and United States where population is out numbering water supply; and

(c) if so, what steps are proposed to be taken to save the country from worst?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA): (a) Yes, Sir. The news-item captioned "Water scarcity may cut life span in India" which appeared in The Hindustan Times, dated 15th January, 2000 has come to notice.

(b) and (c) Water supply and sanitation being a State subject, the responsibility for planning, formulation, execution and operation & maintenance of the water supply scheme rests with the concerned State Governments and urban local bodies. The Ministry of Urban Development, which is the nodal Ministry for urban water supply and sanitation, facilitates in formulation of policy guidelines and strategies for implementation of urban water supply and sanitation programme in States and UTs. Based on the information furnished by the States and UT Departments in-charge of urban water supply and sanitation, about 90% of the urban population have been provided with safe drinking water supply facilities as on 31.3.97. No figures are available with regard to other countries mentioned in the news item. The Working Group on Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Sector for 9th Five Year Plan (1997-2002) constituted by the Planning Commis- sion recommended a target coverage of 100% population with safe drinking water facilities in the urban areas.

1186[withdrawn]

Private Sector Investment in Infrastructure Projects

1187. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to refer to reply to unstarred Question 1204 given in Rajya Sabha on 13th December, 1999 and state the details for promoting

urban development infrastructure projects like water supply, drainage, sewerage, etc. by promoting private/corporate sector investment and public-private partnership?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA): Solid Waste Management and Water Treatment have been added to the definition of infrastructure for benefits under the Income Tax Act and investments in public companies providing long term finance for such urban infrastructure are included as approved investments for charitable trust.

These will help in attracting private/corporate sector participation in urban infrastructure and enable more investment in such projects.

Healthy Cities Programme

1188. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated a proposal "Healthy Cities Programme" with financial assistance from World Health Organisation (WHO);

(b) if so, the details thereof togetherwith the total assistance received by Government, so far, from WHO; and

(c) the names of the cities in Andhra Pradesh which have been covered under the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Under the Healthy Cities Programme, WHO had approved an amount of US $ 125.000 for the biennium 1998-99 in order to promote and integrate the concepts of environmental health and healthy cities in municipalities and communities.

(c) No city in Andhra Pradesh was covered under the scheme. However, the Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad and the Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies Hyderabad were entrusted with the task of developing Urban Environmental Health Indicators and conducting training courses respectively under the Healthy City Programme.